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## Podcast Transcript (English)

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### Addressing Climate Change in America through Public Transportation

(Length: 03:09)

**Narrator:**

According to Rob Farrington, who heads the advanced vehicle group at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, the most promising solution to issues such as energy security and climate change is to get people to use transportation other than individual vehicles.

Much has been said about emerging technologies such as gasoline-electric hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles. But Farrington says that the question of which one of these is the best technology misses the point. Public transport, he says, is not a technology solution, and it's not fashionable, but the sooner we consider it seriously, the better.

Most experts believe that a mix of advanced automotive technologies, better public transport and other alternatives to driving will be needed to reach the ambitious goals set by President Obama for 2020: a 14 percent cut in U.S. greenhouse gas emissions below 2005 levels and 1.8 billion barrels of petroleum saved through fuel efficiency. Passenger vehicles and light trucks account for almost 45 percent of U.S. petroleum demand and 17 percent of greenhouse gas emissions.

Making public transport a viable alternative to car commuting will require many infrastructure investments.

New technologies, like plug-in electric hybrid vehicles, are unlikely to make a significant impact on the market in the next few decades, according to analysts. Farrington said it would take 15 years to replace the entire U.S. passenger auto fleet if every vehicle sold today were a hybrid or plug-in hybrid. The focus should be on improving internal-combustion engines and discouraging individual driving, experts say.

Most analysts agree that research on advanced auto technologies should accelerate. Farrington feels that a narrow focus on technology reduces attention on public transport and more compact communities built around public transportation.

Efforts to address these issues are complicated because the goals of increasing energy security and decreasing global warming are not always compatible. For example, biofuels were recently viewed as a solution to both U.S. energy and climate problems. In 2007, Congress approved a fivefold increase in their production. But producing biofuels is energy-intensive, and a number of studies have cast doubt on the climate benefits of biofuels, primarily corn-based ethanol.

The Obama administration is working to produce comprehensive and consistent national energy and transportation strategies. It is a challenge, however, as many different agencies have authority over different aspects of the related issues.

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